

THE TEMPTATION.

BY REV. W. W. MARSH.

He sat in a pleasant place apart,
As the church's legends tell,
With bowed white head and prayerful heart,
O'er the Word he loved so well;
And his face was calm with the inner peace
Which comes of the sense of sin's release.

But as He sat with the Word alone,
Lo! the place was all aflame;
For a sudden light around him shone,
And a low voice named his name;
And he raised from the holy page his eyes
With the fearless gaze of calm surprise.

And lo! standing by him in the place,
One gloriously strong and fair;
With a lingering light on his kingly face,
And a light on his flowing hair,
And every line was in grace complete,
From crown to golden-sandaled feet.

There were gems on the forehead blazing
With
And gems on the heaving breast;
There were purple robes of wondrous
form

Drooping round the limbs at rest;
And a gracious sweetness of lip and eye,
Which put every thought of trembling by.

"I am thy Christ," said the presence then;
"Bow down at thy Master's feet;
For I, who love the children of men,
Do claim but the homage meet."
But the white-haired saint, with slow, calm
eye

Would see full proof of assumption high.
From the forehead's gem to the firm-poised
foot

He traced him line by line,
As if by these, clear-tongued though mute,
He might read him sign by sign;
But paused, wide-eyed, at the shapely
hand,
And the fair white foot without a brand.

"Where are the prints of the nails," he
said,
"Which thy hands and feet should show?
The scars my Christ brought up from the
dead—

A sign which the world may know?
Thou! thou art not He—my Lord, my own!
I will bow my knee to Him alone."

The sweetness vanished from lip and eye
At the word of the clear-eyed saint;
The face grew dark with a passion high,
And the blaze of gems grew faint;
The presence vanished; the tempter knew
The sign had smitten him through and
through.

O Lord! this seal of Thy truth I own;
I bow to this sacred sign;
Until the print of the nails is shown,
I can bend no knee of mine:
For the organ's swell or censer's swing,
Not always reveal the Christ, my King.

I tire of creeds which are only creeds,
As I chafe at pious hands;
And I tire of speech which brings no deeds
Of love to the perishing lands;
For the faith is false which brings not in
A help for man in the strife with sin.

Thy heart, O Lord, in these nails outspake;
A love to the death was Thine;
And so through the moods which shift and
break

I will test this soul of mine;
So the tempter, foiled, shall flee again,
As he reads the sign of grace again.
—*Zion's Herald.*

HOW PRUE SAVED THE CORN CROP.

BY MARGARET VANDEGRIFT.

PART I.

Prue was only fifteen when her mother died, but when her father talked of looking for a house-keeper, to relieve his little daughter of the care of the house, she begged so hard to be allowed to "try" that he consented, and after that there was never any more talk about another house-keeper. It was sad work at first; the loneliness when her father and Bob were out about the farm, and the Irish girl was singing cheerfully in the distant kitchen, was sometimes very hard to bear. The house was large, and, although Prue had always done her share of the work without murmur she had not been particularly interested in it, and so had not noticed how her mother

planned and managed. It came to her in time, however, as almost anything will when it is rightly tried for, and it came all the sooner for her father's loving praise and Bob's openly expressed admiration of her achievements. Prue was young, and deeply as she mourned for and missed her mother it was only natural that her life should take a new shape and begin again. But for Mr. Henderson it was different. The old place seemed more and more lonesome to him; the bleak New England hills seemed bleaker and more dreary. Prue had noticed the sort of tired restlessness which possessed him, and was not surprised when he called her to him one evening and asked her if it would grieve her very much to leave the old place.

"Not if I were to go with you and Bob," Prue answered, brightly. "Where is it we are going, dear?"

"It is not settled, daughter," said Mr. Henderson, his face brightening at her ready answer; "but your Uncle Will writes me that I could get a fine farm west to his out there in Illinois for half of what we have in bank now, and the day after his letter came I had a very good offer to rent this place for a year; I wouldn't sell it, for I don't want to burn my ships till I've made sure of my landing-place; but the rent will secure us a living, even if we don't do anything great with the farm the first year, and Will says that if we don't like out there he'll be glad to take the farm off my hands at the end of the year; he'd buy it now if he had the ready money, he's so sure land is going up about there."

"Then I think we'd better do it, by all means," said Prue cheerfully. "What does Bob think? or haven't you asked him yet?"

"Yes, I spoke to him this afternoon," said Mr. Henderson, "and he's keen to go; but he said he was afraid it would be hard on you both ways—leaving here and roughing it out there."

"That's all Bob knows about it!" said Prue laughing. "I shall be sorry on some accounts to leave here," she added, her face saddening a little; "but as for the roughing it, that will be nothing but fun; it would be a sort of perpetual picnic."

"You're a good little girl, Prue," said her father, pulling her down on his knee, "but I do not wish to take advantage of your goodness. Think it over for a day or two—there's no great hurry—and I'll inquire about the freightage of the goods and one or two things like that, and ask your Aunt Prudence what she thinks. I always thought a good deal of her judgment."

The result of all the thinking and talking was a decision in favor of going. Aunt Prudence did an unselfish thing when she cast her vote on that side, for Prue was her favorite niece, her "name child," and the brightest thing in her somewhat lonely life. But she saw how her brother was "breaking" under the first real trouble of his life; how little chance there was for Bob ever to make more than a bare living off the stony hill-side farm, and how much thinner and paler Prue had grown in the last year. The move was made, and if Prue felt disheartened when the wagon containing the few possessions they had thought best to bring, and which were easily stowed behind the wide seat on which she sat with her father and Bob, drew up at the door of a staring unpainted house, with shutterless windows and porchless doors, nobody knew it but just herself. How she did work in the weeks that followed! And how the color came into her cheeks and the light into her eyes. She wondered why ham and corn-bread and potatoes had never tasted so good at home. She slept like a baby, and as she saw how her father once more cheerful, interested, "like himself," glad little bursts of song began to burst through the ugly house. No one would have called it ugly after they had lived there a year. Bob was four years older than Prue, and beginning to feel very fatherly toward her, but that did not hinder him from joining in all her plans for beautifying the new home. He had always had a "turn" for carpenter's work, and it did not take him long to fit up the second story of the barn for a work-shop. Here, on rainy days, he and his father worked, while Prue, seated on an easy chair which no one would have suspected of ever having been a barrel, sewed or read aloud, as the work was quiet or noisy.

And out of that wonderful shop came shutters, and porches, and clothes-props, and clothes-horses, and chairs, and tables,

and shelves, and picture-frames, and an arbor, and so many little things to make Prue's house-keeping easier that I cannot begin to name them all. Bob snatched a day in June to do the rough work for Prue in what they called the "front yard," though the nearest fence was half a mile off, and before frost came all the obliging flowers which grow quickly and bloom freely were making a show of which the family was justly proud, and which was the admiration of all the neighbors. Anybody within twelve miles was a neighbor here, and by winter they had made many pleasant friends, and the loneliness which had been dreaded for Prue went to join the host of unfulfilled apprehensions which must be somewhere, though fortunately nobody knows where! There was a neat little building four or five miles away which did duty as church, school-room or lecture-room as the case might be, and here, at least once a week, and sometimes much oftener, Prue and Bob exchanged greetings with the hearty, bright-faced boys and girls who had welcomed them to the neighborhood. These meetings and the long entertaining letters from Aunt Prudence, which seldom failed to reach her on Saturday evening, Prue declared kept her from "stagnating."

She had soon become popular in the neighborhood, chiefly for her own sake, but partly at first for the freedom with which she shared the books and papers with which Aunt Prudence kept her constantly supplied. The boys and girls soon knew that they could always find good reading matter, which would be cheerfully lent them at Prue Henderson's and the start this gave them quickly resulted in a book-dub which subsequently blossomed into a library. Aunt Prudence declared that there was "no excuse for anybody" who was not well informed in these days of twenty-cent Macaulays and Carlyles. And the papers and books which she sent, although by no means uniformly "solid," never included any trash. So things went on, pleasantly and prosperously, for a year; the farm had more than fulfilled Mr. Henderson's expectation, and he had more than fulfilled Prue's hopes. He had seemed to grow young again in the society of his brother, and was better and stronger than he had been for years. Bob, who had been rather slender, and inclined to stoop, had grown into a great broad-chested straight-backed fellow, "too big for the house," Prue said, and she herself, plump and sunburned and rosy, did her father's heart good every time he looked at her. But trouble came to them, right in the midst of the second summer's work. Mr. Henderson was caught in a heavy rain-storm several miles from home, and the sudden drenching on a warm day, followed by the chill which his wet clothes gave him, ended in rheumatic fever. He was not alarmingly ill, and he was very patient and gentle with Prue and Bob, who nursed him devotedly, but they could see that he was "feeling his heart out" about the great field of corn, the hoeing of which was to have begun on the very day upon which he began his illness instead. Everybody was busy. No help of any kind could be found; poor Bob fought valiantly with the weeds, which had sprung up like so many Jonah's gourd, after the rain. But there was much to do about the house and barn as well as in the field; their only "hired man" left them at a day's notice, and Bob was almost in despair. Prue was glad that her birthday happened along just as things were at their bluest—it made a diversion. A letter had come from Aunt Prudence, telling Prue that her birthday box would be found at the railway-station if the various express-agents had done their duty, and an obliging neighbor, who had been at the station on business of his own, and found the box there, came two or three miles out of his way to bring it to Prue. She kept it untouched until evening, and then, with Bob's help, unpacked it in her father's room. Aunt Prudence had made a special trip to Boston for the filling of that box. There was a lovely steel-engraving for the parlor, a pretty set of "cheese-cloth" curtains for that and Prue's own room, two or three new books, and a great pile of magazines contributed by several of Prue's old neighbors and many little things for making cooking easy. Prue was a first-rate cook by this time, and she welcomed the new egg-beater and gem-pans and other little devices almost as warmly as she did the books. It was a large box, and every thing which an ordinary mortal would have filled

with a "wad" of paper was stuffed with a lemon! Prue and Bob kept taking out lemons until the foot of Mr. Henderson's bed was covered with them, and they were both laughing.

"I wonder what auntie did expect me to do with all those lemons!" Prue exclaimed, when the box was at last empty, and she had laid the fifth dozen on the bed.

"Give a party, to be sure!" said Bob, "and as soon as father's around again we'll do it. You'll have to hurry, daddy, or the lemons 'll spoil, and that would be a pity!"

"I feel as if I'd be well enough to get about the room to-morrow, anyhow," said Mr. Henderson, more briskly, Prue noticed, than he had spoken for a long time, "and you and Prue deserve a party, and everything else you want, for the way you've taken care of me. I dare say I can hobble down to the parlor by the end of the week, so you could ask them after church on Sunday; it will live us all up."

Prue was reading Aunt Prudence's letter, a pleasure which had been deferred by the unpacking of the box.

"Oh, this accounts for the lemons!" she exclaimed; and she read aloud:

"Your uncle Silas's ship came in just as I was going to pack your box, dear, and then he came in, with all these lemons in a basket for you. I'll bet she's a good deal more than twelve miles from a lemon he said, so you can give her these, with her old uncle's love; it would be something a good sight better, if I'd sold my cargo. I thought at first that I could not possibly get them all in, and then it occurred to me to use them for stuffing, instead of paper. So now you can 'give a party' as soon as ever father is well enough, and you can all drink lemonade instead of water in the meantime!"

"Don't you think you had better take auntie's advice at once, father!" said Prue, springing up. "It seems to me I've heard somewhere that lemonade is good for rheumatism, and I think Bob and I both have a touch of it to-night. Come, Bob, pump the water while I squeeze the lemons."

Uncle Silas would have been highly gratified if he could have seen that convivial party, pledging him and Aunt Prudence in brimming glasses between mouthfuls of Prue's birthday cake. But those lemons had a brighter destiny yet in store for them. The suggestion of the party had set Prue thinking, and by the next evening she had thought.

"Bob," she said taking his arm as they walked among the flourishing flower-beds after their early tea, "is it very bad about that corn?"

"Very bad indeed, my dear," answered Bob, with a cloudy face. "I've nearly broken my back over it to-day, and for all the impression I've made it seems as if I might almost as well have let it alone. I was never so forcibly struck with the vastness of a large cornfield before!"

"How long would it take a dozen men to clean it?" asked Prue, in a very business-like manner.

"Just about a dozen days, I should think," said Bob—"or no, that's too high a figure—I wasn't thinking of what I was saying; a dozen men would clean it in a day, with steady hoeing. But there is no dozen on hand, my dear, and I can't put in a whole day at a time, any day—that's what makes it so hopeless!"

"Forty mads, with forty mops,
Sweep it for half a year,
Do you believe," the Walrus said,
"That they could get it clear?"
"I doubt it," said the Carpenter,
And shed a bitter tear."

Bob, you looked so exactly like the Walrus when you said that!" and Prue, catching Bob's hands in hers, compelled him to whirl around with her in a wild sort of a waltz. He stopped her, finally, by picking her up and carrying her into the house.

"Prudence, indeed!" he said, giving her a little shake as he set her down. "I believe you are crazy. Do you know how much bread and butter that cornfield represents, reckless child?"

"You know 'we're all mad,' dear," answered Prue, with sudden gravity, "but there's a method in my madness Robert, *toi que j'aime*. Do you know there's only enough flour for one more batch of bread, and not a cake at all, at all!"

"I supposed that was about the state of the case," said Bob, looking a little surprised at the sudden change of the subject, "but I've been putting off a voyage to the mill, as our best translators would have put it,